



It's All About Families

WIC Family Centered Education (FCE)

August 2002 Newsletter

FCE Educators Go Forth and Share *Pilot Updates*

We have heard back from a number of you about how the group education sessions are going.

Here are some highlights:

- **Grow Your Own**-some agencies did a planting demo and gave out "gardening kits" with soil, seeds, rocks and containers. Others planted a seed ahead of time to show how it could grow; still others gathered planting containers by emailing their staff. (Some parents got library cards because of the WIC class!)
- **Five a Day**-parents liked the activities! Some agencies got free materials from Five a Day and Nutrition Network. Some staff paper-clipped a few book pages together to shorten the reading time.
- **Grocery Shopping with the Family** – parents enjoyed the learning games; class a little long for one agency because of space-standing room only for a few parents.
- **General**- Yolo WIC may be getting some books funded by First Books. Agencies shared that for some parents, reading at all was a new activity. (You can display some wordless books- a list is in your FCE binder, tab 8.)

Send in your surveys to JBA as soon as you get them-put agency name on them!

FCE Goes National

California's FCE was one of six state projects selected for showcasing at the National WIC Association (NWA) Breastfeeding and Nutrition conference in Phoenix! We're connecting with other states... will keep you posted.

Check Out These Resources!

- **First Books**- funding source for free books- www.firstbook.org
- **Dannon Institute**-parent materials; nutrition reading lists - www.celebratehealthyeating.org
- **RIF**- articles related to reading, general lists of recommended books by age, book funding- www.rif.org/home

Conference Calls

Please join us for the next calls:

- Thursday, September 5; 4-5 PM
and/or
- Friday, September 6; 8-9 AM

877-354-0743; password 789729

Agenda for these two calls:

- Update on efforts
- Grant funding opportunities
- What's next

If you can't join us, please email Heather with anything you would like to share with others.

Please contact us any time!

Heather Reed

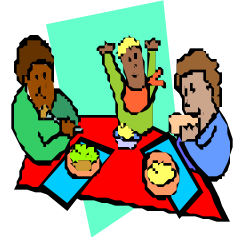
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The WIC FCE Message is Coming Through *Loud and Clear*

By Judy King, MSW, James Bowman Associates



What Message Are You Sending?

As you are offering family centered sessions in your agency, you are sending one very important message loud and clear: ***“Parents, you are capable! Parents and caregivers, you can be successful! You can do it!”***

These messages all have to do with an important concept called self-efficacy. Research has shown us that if we can help parents see that they are capable and that they can be successful, we have given them a lasting message that they draw on again and again.

What Strengths Are You Building?

In WIC Family Centered Education, the family is the focus, and in each of your education sessions you are building on strengths that each family has:

- ❖ **When the mother of a preschooler** is involved with her child as they plant seeds, she is seeing that she plays an important role as a teacher of her child.
- ❖ **When a toddler and his father** choose fun items to take with them to the grocery store, the father can feel more relaxed about going on this outing together. He has tools that increase his confidence and help him feel successful as a parent.
- ❖ **A grandparent who cares for several grandchildren** learns at WIC that story telling is a wonderful way to help young children get ready for school. She also finds out it is an important way to pass on family and cultural traditions. The grandparent experiences a sense of self-efficacy, rather than dwelling on her lack of English skills.

This is what WIC FCE is all about . . .
building on strengths in families
and sending messages to both parents and children
that they are capable and have much to offer.



Who Are You Talking To?

When you offer group education to family groups (parents and children attending together), sometimes it is a challenge figuring out who you should be talking to and how you should talk to them. We often use a high voice and simple words when we talk to toddlers and preschoolers. This is probably a very different style than the voice we use when we talk to other adults like our friends, colleagues or parents receiving WIC services.

How Do You Talk To Families?

In WIC Family Centered Education, we have both parents and children together. Sometimes you might feel unsure about how to make a class interesting and inviting to both the young and old. A few hints to help you on this path:

- ❖ **Use words that are respectful and clear to both kids and adults**

For example, when a parent is very frustrated with the child, she might begin to talk about how “bad” the child is. You can invite the parent and child to be the first ones involved in your planned activity. Save any conversation about a child to a time when the child is not there.

- ❖ **Use the phrase “your family”**

When asking a question about favorite stories or books, ask “What kinds of stories does your family like to share?” This sends a message to families that this is something that they do together, and it allows both children and parents to answer.

- ❖ **Make friendly eye contact with both young and old**

When sharing a book with your group, make sure that all the eager listeners see you and the colorful pictures. It is fun for the adults to experience the book, as well as the children. And then you won’t feel like a preschool teacher with adults in the back row watching over you.

What If Only Parents Are There?

In some cases you may offer a FCE session and find that you have only adults attending. What a great opportunity this is to share with them the neat parent-child activities that they can try at home with their children!

Parents are always looking for new ideas, and you are in a great spot to show them some ideas in action. And don’t forget to invite them to bring their children with them next time!